



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

#### 30 CFR Part 950

[SATS No. WY-050-FOR; Docket ID: OSM-2021-0004;  
S1D1S SS08011000 SX064A000 212S180110;  
S2D2S SS08011000 SX064A000 21XS501520]

#### Wyoming Regulatory Program

**AGENCY:** Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; public comment period and opportunity for public hearing on proposed amendment.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), are announcing receipt of a proposed regulatory and statutory amendment to the Wyoming coal program (Wyoming program) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). On March 2, 2016 the Wyoming Environmental Quality Council approved a number of revisions to the rules governing coal exploration by drilling under the Wyoming program. Specifically, the proposed revisions include more detailed instructions for plugging and sealing drill holes, incorporate best management practices, and make additional formatting and organizational changes. Additionally, between 1978 and 2007 the Wyoming state legislature enacted a number of revisions to the statutes governing coal exploration by

drilling. The proposed statutory revisions reflect organizational updates at the Wyoming Land Quality Division, correct a typographical error, provide more detailed instructions for plugging and sealing drill holes, incorporate provisions for the awarding of attorney fees and other litigation costs, and include more detailed instructions for bond release. Accordingly, the State submitted this proposal to OSMRE at its own initiative. This document gives the times and locations that the Wyoming program and this proposed amendment to that program are available for your inspection, the comment period during which you may submit written comments on the amendment, and the procedures that we will follow for the public hearing, if one is requested.

**DATES:** We will accept written comments on this amendment until 4:00 p.m., M.D.T., [Insert date 30 days after the date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]. If requested, we may hold a public hearing or meeting on the amendment on [Insert date 25 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]. We will accept requests to speak at a hearing until 4:00 p.m., M.D.T., on [Insert date 15 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments, identified by SATS No. WY-050-FOR, by any of the following methods:

- *Mail/Hand Delivery:* OSMRE, Attn: Jeffrey Fleischman, P.O. Box 11018, 100 East B Street, Room 4100, Casper, Wyoming 82602
- *Fax:* (307) 261-6552
- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

*Instructions:* All submissions received must include the agency name and docket number for this rulemaking. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional

information on the rulemaking process, see the “Public Comment Procedures” heading of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

*Docket:* For access to the docket to review copies of the Wyoming program, this amendment, a listing of any scheduled public hearings or meetings, and all written comments received in response to this document, you must go to the address listed below during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. You may receive one free copy of the amendment by contacting OSMRE’s Casper Field Office or the full text of the program amendment is available for you to read at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Attn: Jeffrey Fleischman, Field Office Director  
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement  
100 East B Street, Casper, Wyoming 82602  
Telephone: (307) 261-6550  
Email: [jfleischman@osmre.gov](mailto:jfleischman@osmre.gov)

In addition, you may review a copy of the amendment during regular business hours at the following location:

Attn: Kyle Wendtland, Administrator  
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality  
Land Quality Division  
200 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 10  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002  
Telephone: (307) 777-7046  
Email: [kyle.wendtland@wyo.gov](mailto:kyle.wendtland@wyo.gov)

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jeffrey Fleischman, Field Office Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 100 East B Street, Casper, Wyoming 82602, Telephone: (307) 261-6550

Email: [jfleischman@osmre.gov](mailto:jfleischman@osmre.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

- I. Background on the Wyoming Program
- II. Description of the Proposed Amendment
- III. Public Comment Procedures
- IV. Procedural Determinations

### **I. Background on the Wyoming Program**

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations on non-Federal and non-Indian lands within its borders by demonstrating that its approved State program includes, among other things, State laws and regulations that govern surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the Act and consistent with the Federal regulations. See 30 U.S.C. 1253(a)(1) and (7). On the basis of these criteria, the Secretary of the Interior conditionally approved the Wyoming program on November 26, 1980. You can find background information on the Wyoming program, including the Secretary's findings, the disposition of comments, and conditions of approval of the Wyoming program in the November 26, 1980 **Federal Register** 45 FR 78637. You can also find later actions concerning the Wyoming program and program amendments at 30 CFR 950.10.

## **II. Description of the Proposed Amendment**

By letter dated June 4, 2021 (Document ID No. OSM-2021-0004), Wyoming sent us an amendment to its program under SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*). We found Wyoming's proposed amendment administratively complete on July 13, 2021.

Between 1978 and 2007 the Wyoming state legislature enacted a number of revisions to the statutes governing coal exploration by drilling. Additionally, on March 2, 2016 the Wyoming Environmental Quality Council approved a number of revisions to the rules governing coal exploration by drilling under the Wyoming program. The proposed amendment is a state initiative intended to update Chapter 14 , which was last revised in 1998. The revised rules were updated to include more detailed directions for plugging and sealing requirements for drill holes. The rules were also updated to include best management practices and standards adopted by the Wyoming State Engineer's Office which conform with accepted practices by the American Society for Testing and Materials, American Water Works Association, and Wyoming DEQ, Water Quality Division regulations. Other revisions include a list of acceptable grout materials requirements to plug the entire hole and immediate capping of drill holes, and adding identification numbers to facilitate inspections. Additional formatting and organizational changes were also made to Chapter 14.

The proposed statutory revisions reflect organizational updates at the Wyoming Land Quality Division, correct a typographical error, provide more detailed instructions for plugging and sealing drill holes, incorporate provisions for the awarding of attorney fees and other litigation costs, and include more detailed instructions for bond release. The full text of the program and/or plan amendment is available for you to read at the locations listed above under **ADDRESSES** or at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

### **III. Public Comment Procedures**

Under the provisions of 30 CFR 732.17(h), we are seeking your comments on whether the amendment satisfies the applicable program approval criteria of 30 CFR 732.15. If we approve the amendment, it will become part of the State program.

#### *Electronic or Written Comments*

If you submit written or electronic comments on the proposed rule during the 30-day comment period, they should be specific, confined to issues pertinent to the proposed regulations, and explain the reason for any recommended change(s). We appreciate any and all comments, but those most useful and likely to influence decisions on the final regulations will be those that either involve personal experience or include citations to and analyses of SMCRA, its legislative history, its implementing regulations, case law, other pertinent State or Federal laws or regulations, technical literature, or other relevant publications.

We cannot ensure that comments received after the close of the comment period (see **DATES**) or sent to an address other than those listed (see **ADDRESSES**) will be included in the docket for this rulemaking and considered.

#### *Public Availability of Comments*

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

#### *Public Hearing*

If you wish to speak at the public hearing, contact the person listed under **FOR**

**FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** by 4:00 p.m., M.D.T. on [Insert date 15 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]. If you are disabled and need reasonable accommodations to attend a public hearing, contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. We will arrange the location and time of the hearing with those persons requesting the hearing. If no one requests an opportunity to speak, we will not hold a hearing.

To assist the transcriber and ensure an accurate record, we request, if possible, that each person who speaks at the public hearing provide us with a written copy of his or her comments. The public hearing will continue on the specified date until everyone scheduled to speak has been given an opportunity to be heard. If you are in the audience and have not been scheduled to speak and wish to do so, you will be allowed to speak after those who have been scheduled. We will end the hearing after everyone scheduled to speak and others present in the audience who wish to speak, have been heard.

#### *Public Meeting*

If only one person requests an opportunity to speak, we may hold a public meeting rather than a public hearing. If you wish to meet with us to discuss the amendment, please request a meeting by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. All such meetings are open to the public and, if possible, we will post notices of meetings at the locations listed under **ADDRESSES**. We will make a written summary of each meeting a part of the administrative record.

#### **IV. Procedural Determinations**

*Executive Order 12866 - Regulatory Planning and Review and Executive Order 13563—Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review*

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory

Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will review all significant rules. Pursuant to OMB guidance, dated October 12, 1993, the approval of State program and/or AML plan amendments is exempted from OMB review under Executive Order 12866. Executive Order 13563, which reaffirms and supplements Executive Order 12866, retains this exemption.

*Other Laws and Executive Orders Affecting Rulemaking*

When a State submits a program amendment to OSMRE for review, our regulations at 30 CFR 732.17(h) require us to publish a notice in the **Federal Register** indicating receipt of the proposed amendment, its text or a summary of its terms, and an opportunity for public comment.

We conclude our review of the proposed amendment after the close of the public comment period and determine whether the amendment should be approved, approved in part, or not approved. At that time, we will also make the determinations and certifications required by the various laws and executive orders governing the rulemaking process and include them in the final rule.



**List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 950**

State regulatory program approval, state-federal cooperative agreement, required program amendments.

David A. Berry, Regional Director,

Unified Regions 5, 7-11.

[FR Doc. 2021-23314 Filed: 10/27/2021 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/28/2021]